Hepatitis C Treatment in Latvia, Italy and Serbia: Examples of Corrupt Government?

May 27, 2016 By Greg Jefferys

Everyday I receive emails from people around the world about how their government is preventing them from accessing generic Hepatitis C treatment by blocking shipments at the border.

Today I received an email (copied below) from a person who I am in the process of assisting in getting generic Hep C meds. He will drive across the border of Latvia to another country where a friend of mine has a 12 week treatment of generic Harvoni wating for him. I am organising the meeting and then this Latvian will drive home and begin treatment of his Hep C.
It will not cost the Latvian government anything. The medicines he will be using will be generics manufactured in India under license from Gilead by an internationally respected and certified pharmaceutical company.
He has to drive across the border because Latvian Customs reguarly blocks shipment of generic Hep C meds and returns them to India.
The same happens in Italy. If an Italian with Hepatitis C seeks to import their own treament, thus saving the Italian Health Service about 30,000 Euros, the Italian Customs will seize the generic Harvoni and either return it to India or destroy it.
The same happens in Serbia.
So every day now I spend a lot of time figuring out ways of getting generic Hep C medicines to people with Hep C in countries like Italy, Serbia and Latvia.
Of course the best option for people in these coutnries is to fly to India and buy the meds there and return home with them.
This is perfectly legal but it is an extra cost that many people cannot meet so I help them find other ways.

So the question arises: Why do governments prevent their people from accessing medicines that will cure a potentially fatal disease like Hepatitis C? It is a disease that has huge social and economic costs and all these countries, like Latvia, Serbia and Italy are not rich countries. They are struggling to provide any treatment through their health systems.
So why do they stop their people getting treatment?

Is it corruption or is it incompetence? I don't know.
Hi Greg
Thank you so much for organizing these generic Hepatitis medicines for me. I know how busy you are fighting this live/death fight for all people who suffers from Hep C. I'm reading your blog.

Lately there is also big attention in Latvia about all this drug deal. Yesterday in news portal was a story about woman who was working in laboratory in hospital for years diagnosing Hep C and now she became sick and tried to purchase generic Harvoni from India and of course Latvian customs siezed her drugs and sent them back to India. In the news was a letter this woman wrote to the President of Latvia explaining how lot of people is betrayed by their own country. We pay taxes, we do care for our own health, but gov can't afford to heal people and there is only 160 spots for treatment with new medicine in a year. So basically, if you are infected but you don't have cirrhosis yet - you'r out until you will become really sick. Doesn't matter how old are you. So there are lot of respond from people here about this problem because nobody really realize a real number of people here infected. In this letter to the president woman was shocked about if gov can't provide treatment then how they dare to take away chance for those who have bought meds by themselves by their own money. This woman was literally crying in this letter that she have been loyal citizen worked in hospital, raised five children and now when she became sick this country doesnt care about her anymore.
It is a terrible thing
Even i'm not treated yet and still are sick ... there is days i can't get out of my head that i should try to do something here to help people with solution. I know that i don t have such a power here, but it ... feels like it would be right if i could help somehow ... spread the word or ... i don't know !
So I hope you'r doing fine and i am amazed with road you have took fighting the war against such enemy ... god bless you!

Best wishes

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Anyway, i know that you are busy and maybe there is no time for you to read such a long letters from me, but i just wanted let you know how things are going in this reagion as we are part of "mighty" EU.

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